

residences for the operatives. One writer says:—The building of small cottages, of a simple and substantial description, would, I think, offer a fair return for landholders or those who have money to invest in erections; and I would recommend as a commencement, the building (upon a uniform plan), by one or more proprietors, ten or twelve plain residences of two or three rooms, with a small allotment of land to each, securely walled in with stone (wood fences soon decay, or are allowed to be carried away). Ten such houses, or perhaps more, might be built upon the frontage of an acre of town land, and a ground rent of less than 1*l.* for each house would satisfy many a holder now-a-day. The buildings need not exceed 25*l.* each, which, at twelve per cent., would amount to about 3*l.* per annum; in all, 4*l.* per annum; but such houses would readily let at 6*l.* 10*s.* per annum, or 2*s.* 6*d.* per week; and for want of such, many deserving and industrious men, with wives and families, are compelled to put up with dwellings which are a disgrace to any civilized community, and utterly incompatible with health, decency, morality, or contentment, in those who have not forgotten "an humble," but healthful, "cottage in Britain."

The most economic material for walls appears to me to be the compact stone found near the Brown Hill Creek. The cost of walls of such a material would not much, if at all, exceed, for 18-inch work, complete, 4*s.* per yard. The walls of a cottage, 12 feet by 15, and 7 feet high (40 yards) would cost 8*l.*; shingled roof and ceiling, with whitewashed and stopped walls, three doors, two windows, and fastenings, 10*l.*; slate floor, 20 yards at 3*s.* 3*d.*; chimneys and partition, 4*l.* The garden wall would be an extra; but surely a garden well secured, in as well worth a remunerative rental here as elsewhere, and the garden walls might be built cheaply of the limestone obtainable beneath the surface of the same land itself in most parts of Adelaide, which would do still better if copped with suitable stone.

Concerning roofs generally, South Australia is well supplied with good as well as cheap material for covering. I allude particularly to shingles, paling, &c.; as for the Willunga slate, it cannot be concealed that it is a tender and fragile article at present; the quarries may improve as they get deeper; but now, it is a matter of some delicacy to cover "hips," or do anything on a roof covered with them. You might as safely tread on a sky-light. But the same quarries afford excellent flagging and slabs. It is held generally that good broad paling or two feet shingles laid carefully, make the soundest roof; although small shingles look better. By-the-by, would it not be worth while to try a venture of palings, shingles, and laths to the Cape? I have known shingles brought thither from America. There is not a single forest tree in the whole Cape Colony that will bear comparison with the noble stringy-bark of Australia, for splitting purposes. The roofs of Cape Town were, in former times, covered with thatch; but many accidents by fire having occurred, the use of it was forbidden in the town; and the Germans have generally formed their roofs with wrought joists laid level, covered with boards (the under side planed), and covered on the upper surface with tons of bricks and waggon loads of mortar, composed of shell-lime, sand, &c.; and after all, the roofs are very imperfect, becoming cracked in all directions, and requiring continual repairs. I am not aware what improvements may have been made since the large influx of English emigrants there; but I believe the palings, shingles, &c., of this colony, if introduced, would find a ready sale. They thatch the roofs in the country with a small round rush in a beautifully smooth, neat, and compact manner, far beyond what I have seen of English thatching, in appearance.

There is one improvement which I think might be borrowed from them with advantage, in the construction of their chimneys, or rather the tops of them. I do not remember to have noticed it elsewhere. It is this:—the upper end of the flue (which is here finished square, and in London with chimney pots) is at the Cape, carried up in the form of a spiral or archimedean screw, by a particular mode of laying the bricks. It is a simple operation, but requires a diagram to explain it properly. But the result of this method of topping the chimneys, is that none such ever occasion the

smoke to be driven back into the house—a very desirable point (in South Australia especially), and they have quite an ornamental appearance.

There is one mode by which the thin slabs of Willunga slate might be made to form a cheap and very substantial roof, that is, by cutting the slabs to a certain size, say 20 inches wide, and 2 feet 6 inches, or 3 feet long, and laying them on the rafters, placed at a proper distance apart to receive them. There is a good method of fastening them, and giving sufficient overlap. They would thus form a cheap and substantial roof, at about fivepence per square foot, for covering the rafters. They are not laid double, as common slating is.

The white ants are very destructive to woodwork in this colony. It was some time before I saw any of these funny little gentlemen; but I have now seen enough of them and their works—and no mistake. There are several plans of keeping them clear of woodwork. I believe they attack all kinds of timber except cedar; but they devour only one part of it, namely, the albuminous portion, which is exposed to fungus or dry rot. It lies between the real grain or annular rings of the tree, and may be preserved from ants by the same means which are used for protection against dry rot, namely, saturating it with some metallic salt. I believe the cottages lately sold in Emigration-square were not touched either by rot, or white ants. The timber of which they were constructed had been kyanized, but a less expensive process would answer equally well.

Water gutters, or spouts should be provided, and a reservoir made, where good water is wanted. It could be cheaply managed. About nineteen inches of rain, I believe, falls yearly in this place, the whole of which is suffered to be a nuisance round our houses, instead of being drained off for future use. I believe the water from the Government-house roof alone, is systematically preserved.

#### SPECIAL COURT OF SEWERS FOR WESTMINSTER.

On Friday, the 27th ult., a court was specially held. Captain Bague in the chair. The first business was a motion by Mr. Mayhew, seconded by Mr. Knight:—"That the order of court relative to works under 50*l.* be rescinded, and that steps be taken forthwith for the appointment of builders to execute such works."

Mr. Mayhew regretted exceedingly that there was so small a court. He thought the confusion in the court was mainly attributable to the new way in which the works under 50*l.* were executed. He thought it perfectly inconsistent that a commission like this should become jobbing bricklayers. Now, he was bound to state to the court, that he did not wish to interfere with Mr. Leslie's plan any further than, that a builder should be appointed for each district to do the jobbing work, and that there should be a contract for each material. That plan he thought would be far better than the present. He felt bound to say, that Mr. Leslie was entitled to infinite credit, and he should be extremely sorry to take away one inch of that credit from the honourable commissioner; he (Mr. Mayhew) had not the slightest doubt that the money saving from the plan was very great, but he did not like the commission to become jobbing bricklayers. He had gone over the accounts, and was satisfied that the saving was very great. The returns he had by him shewed that fact, while under the old system the jobbing works had cost annually about 6,366*l.*; under Mr. Leslie's new plan he thought they would not cost more than 3,000*l.* The paper presented at the last court would also evidence that. The gross expenditure since the new plan began was about 568*l.*, or about 4*l.* a week, against about 118*l.* on the old system. After the motion was read by the chairman,—

Mr. Leslie rose and said, that it was at all times attended with inconvenience to public bodies to rescind their orders; and it never should be done without some urgent necessity. Nothing could be more gentlemanly than the manner in which Mr. Mayhew had stated his case for inducing the court to rescind an order of court; which upon his own showing, was working most advantageously in a pecuniary sense for the rate-payers; but the great point of his argument was, that it was derogatory to

the court, as holding a commission from the crown, to become what he termed jobbing bricklayers. When the plan for doing the works under 50*l.* by the surveyor's clerks of the works and workmen employed by the court, which he had the honour to submit, was carried by two Courts of Sewers in October last, and which plan was to commence and did commence on the 8th of November last, what was the course that was adopted, at a time when more assistance was required, inasmuch as all these small works were to be done without a contractor? Subsequent courts had resolved that the whole surveyors' department was inefficient. Mr. Dowley was shelled under the title of consulting surveyor; and, poor man, for many weeks he had been confined to his bed, and had never been near the office at all. Mr. Doul, the assistant surveyor, had been virtually discharged, and consequently being here only until the 25th of March, he could not be expected under the system by which he had been harassed, to feel much interest or take any unnecessary responsibility about a new system which so many of the professional commissioners were anxious should fail; and the court had refused to appoint a surveyor, or even to allow Mr. Phillips, their very able clerk of the works, to fill up the gap made by these dismissals, and to test his abilities for conducting the works by a six months' trial at a small salary. Mr. Leslie begged the court distinctly to understand, that these facts were mentioned by him not as any apology for the system he had had the honour to propose, and which had now been in operation in the two largest districts since the 8th of November last, and in the whole four districts since the 5th December, and with the most triumphant results in spite of all the obstacles that had been thrown in the way of working the new system. What were the results? Mr. Leslie then proceeded to detail, that from the 8th of November, 1845, to the 10th February, 1846, the expenditure had been—

On the eastern division ..... 2142 9*s.* 11*d.*  
" western division ..... 257 8*s.* 6*d.*

From the 5th December, 1845, to the 19th February, 1846, the expenditure had been:—

On the Ranelagh division ..... 2119 15*s.* 10*d.*  
" Counters Creek division .. 23 10*s.* 1*d.*  
General disbursements over the  
two periods ..... 38 12*s.* 10*d.*

Total expenditure... 4611 17*s.* 4*d.*

From this gross sum there were two deductions to be made of 31*l.* 7*s.* 1*d.* and 22*l.* for half a week's more works than the return relating to the old system... 53 7*s.* 1*d.*

4557 10*s.* 5*d.*

The return of the periods of the (1845) 0*s.* 2*d.*  
old system shows the expense }

The speaker then proceeded to detail to the court, that for less money a vastly increased amount of works had been done, and much better done than during the contract system. The excess of pages in the complaint-book under the same period of the new system, had been 21 per cent.; the excess in number of complaints had been 34 per cent., and the excess in the number of gully-drains cleared and repaired had been 42 per cent.; under the given periods of the old system the number was 337, and under the new system 478. But how had this great excess of work in cleaning and repairing gully-drains been executed? Under the new system, by an entire cleansing from the street right down into the sewer, and the reparations had also been complete. All the officers of the court had informed him, viz.: Messrs. Bell, Phillips, Webster, Morton, and Budd, that this cleansing of gully-drains had never been done so completely and effectually as under the new system. In conclusion, he hoped the court would stand by the former order, and continue a system which, in spite of so many obstacles, had produced such important results.

Mr. Cumberlege thought it would only weaken the force of the statements of Mr. Leslie of the results of the new system, were he to occupy much of the time of the court. The statements of the honourable commissioner had indeed been the most expressive rhetoric of facts. He felt bound to say that